

Chapter 6 Adolescents and Young Adults

- Nearly 40% of alive adolescent AIDS cases are among females.
- No single mode of transmission accounts for a majority of alive adolescent cases; however, MSM behavior accounts for 24% of cases in this age category.
- Alive adolescent AIDS cases in injecting drug use and presumed heterosexual transmission categories are composed of equal proportions of males and females

Despite high-risk behaviors in adolescents, and because of the lag between HIV infection and AIDS, relatively few AIDS cases are diagnosed among teenagers (N=50). The small number of cases in this age group does not allow for an in-depth analysis. Given the lengthy incubation period to HIV disease, many cases among young adults (age 20-24 years) are probably the result of behaviors engaged in during adolescence. In order to understand what puts adolescents at risk, this report will analyze AIDS cases among 13 to 24 year olds as one group.

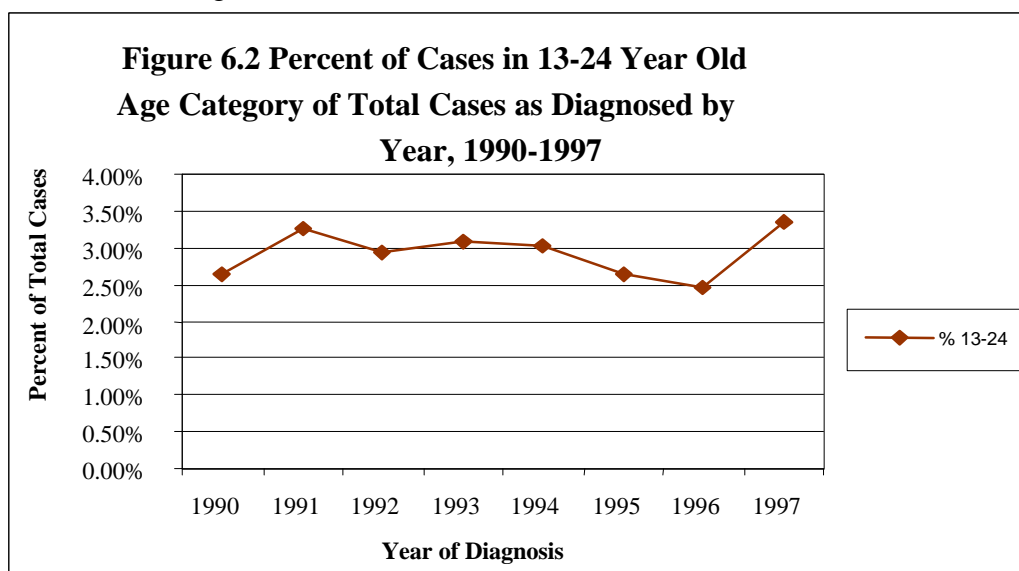
In addition to expanding the age category, other data sources are analyzed to further illustrate potential HIV risk among adolescents.

Figure 6.1 Alive AIDS Cases by Sex, Race/Ethnicity, and Transmission Mode for 13 – 24 Year Old Age Category

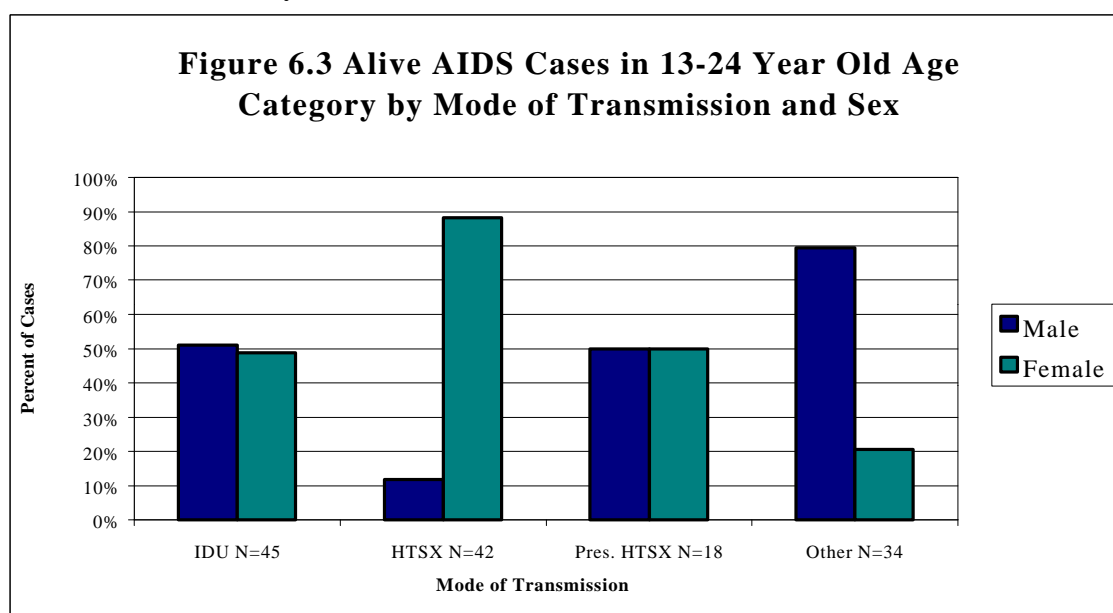
Alive AIDS Cases (Alive as of 7/1/98) N=194	
Sex	
Male	119 (61%)
Female	75 (39%)
Race/Ethnicity	
White	84 (43%)
Black	51 (26%)
Hispanic	57 (29%)
Other	2 (1%)
Transmission Mode	
MSM	47 (24%)
IDU	45 (23%)
MSM/IDU	8 (4%)
HTSX	42 (22%)
Presumed HTSX	18 (9%)
Other	34 (18%)

Alive AIDS cases in 13 to 24 year olds are more likely to be female than in other age categories. While only 24% of all people living with AIDS are female, 39% of 13 to 24 year olds living with AIDS are women. Thirteen to twenty-four year olds living with AIDS also differ from all people living with AIDS in that risk is evenly distributed among male to male sex, injecting drug use, and heterosexual sex. However, it is important to note that among 13 to 24 year old males, male to male sex accounts for 40% of alive cases.

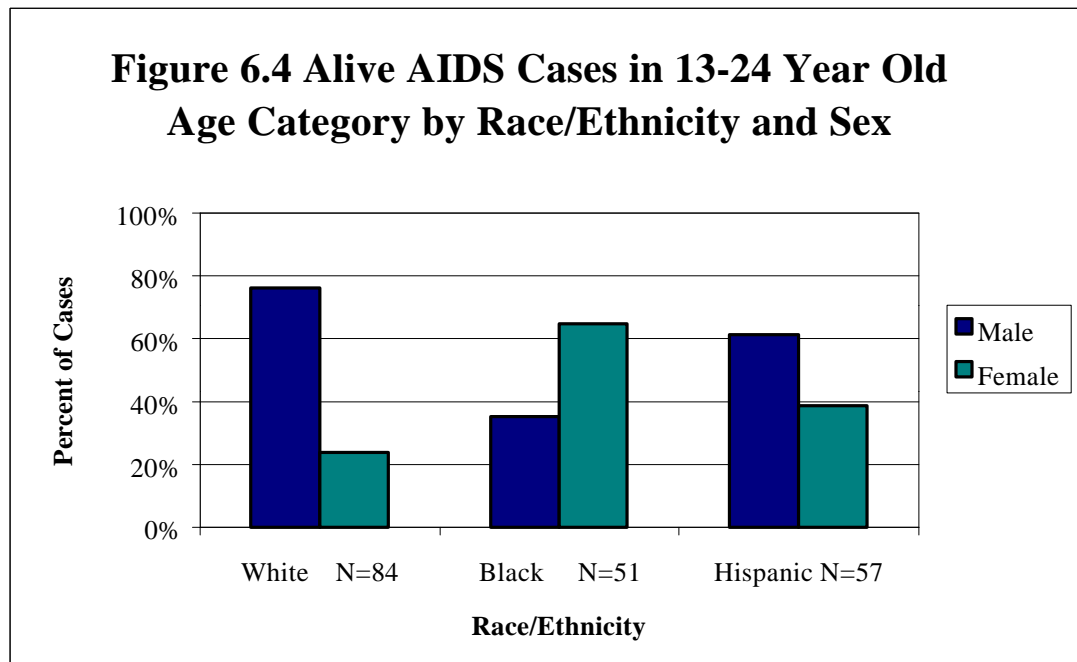
From 1990 through 1997, adolescent cases have accounted for about 3% of all cases.



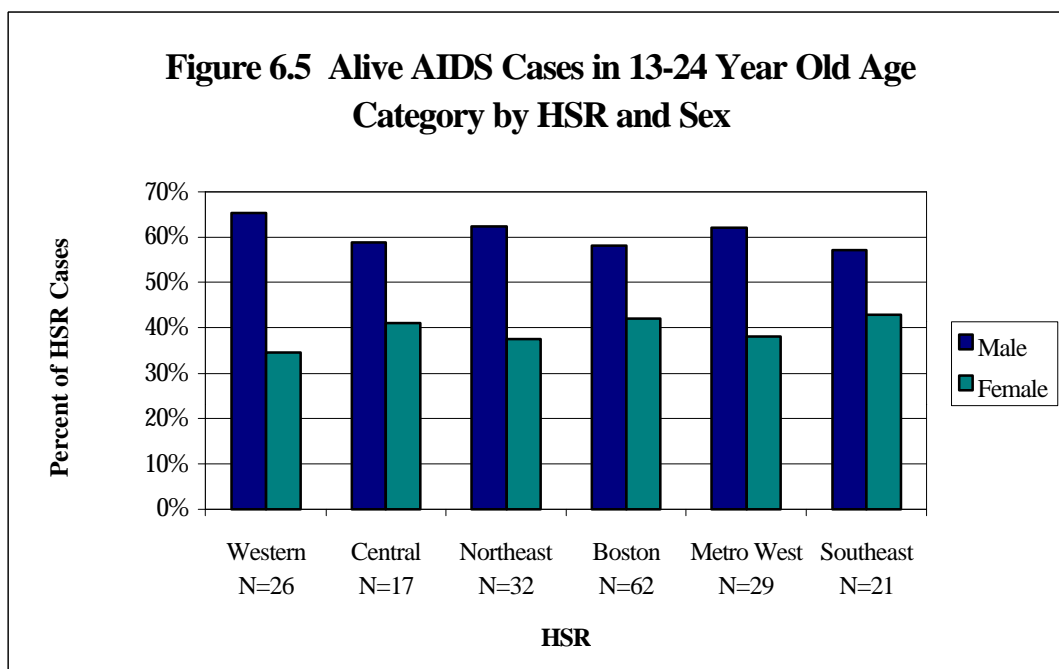
As shown in Figure 6.3, females and males account for nearly equal proportions of injecting drug use and presumed heterosexual cases. Confirmed heterosexual cases are predominately female (88%) and cases in the “other” category are predominately male (79%). The large proportion of male cases in the “other” category is a result of the large number of hemophiliacs in the 13 through 24 year old age category. Hemophilia is a genetic disorder with a clinical presentation seen almost exclusively in males.



As depicted in Figure 6.4, women make up 65 percent of Black cases while they account for only 24% and 39% of White and Hispanic cases respectively.



Across regional health service areas, Boston accounts for one third of alive adolescent AIDS cases. There are between two and three times as many cases in the Boston region than in any other region. The percentages of male and female cases are consistent across regions.



As illustrated in Figure 6.6, the Western region has the largest proportion of Hispanic adolescent cases (54%) followed by the Northeast region with 41%. The Boston region has the greatest proportion of Black cases among youth (37%). It is also the region where there is the most even distribution of cases by race. In the Metro West and Southeast regions, adolescent cases are predominately White, 59% and 67%, respectively.

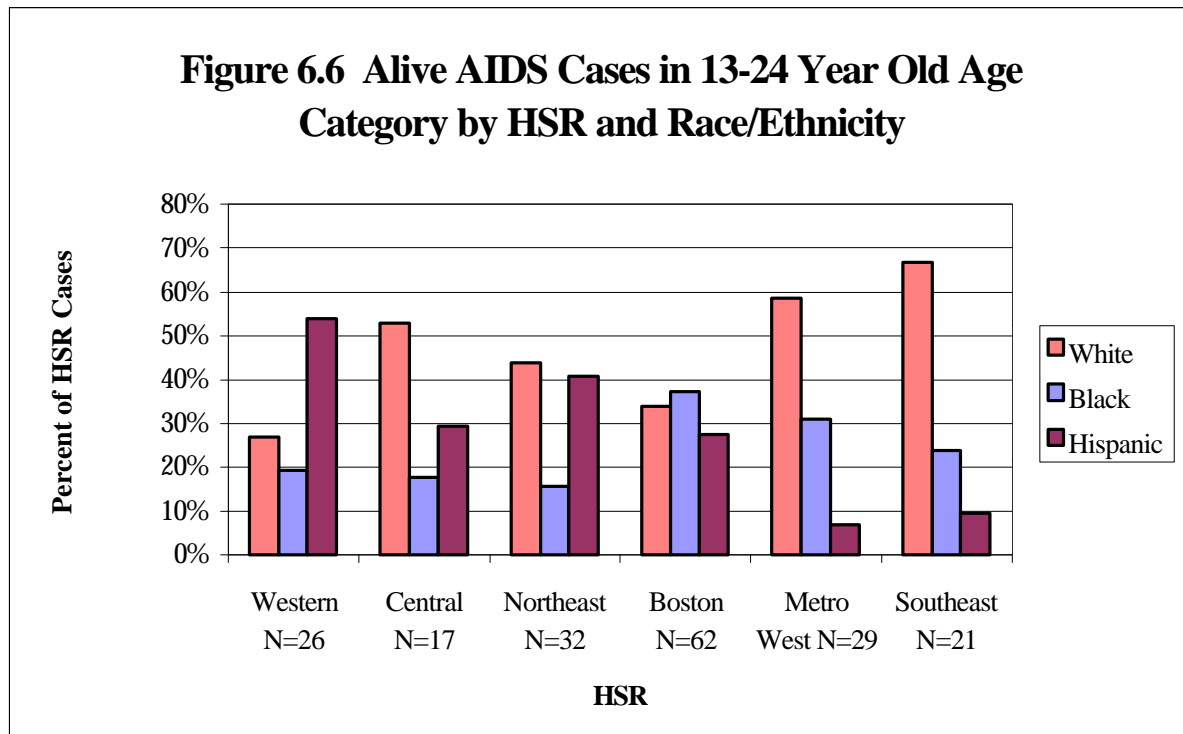
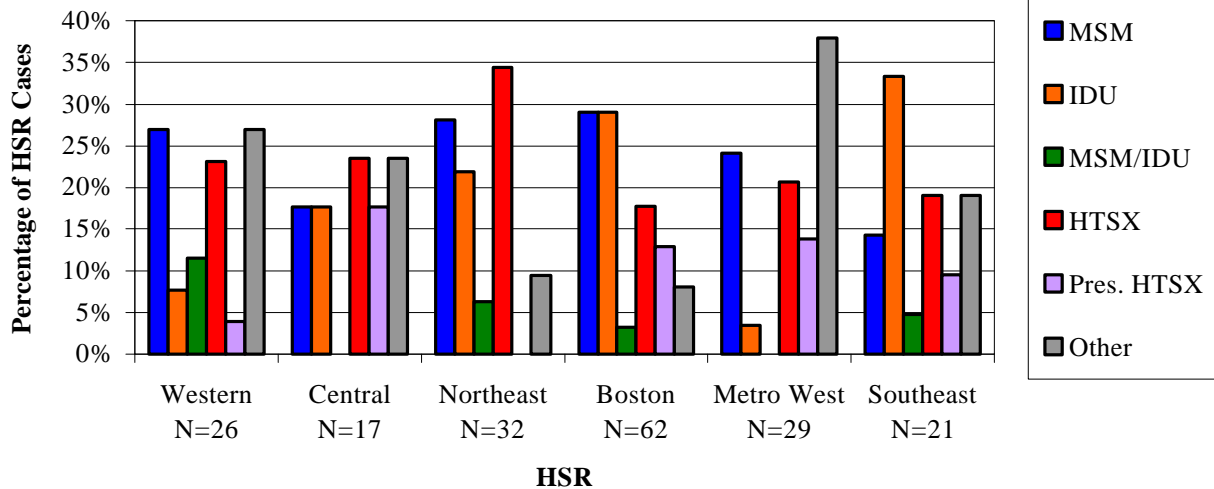
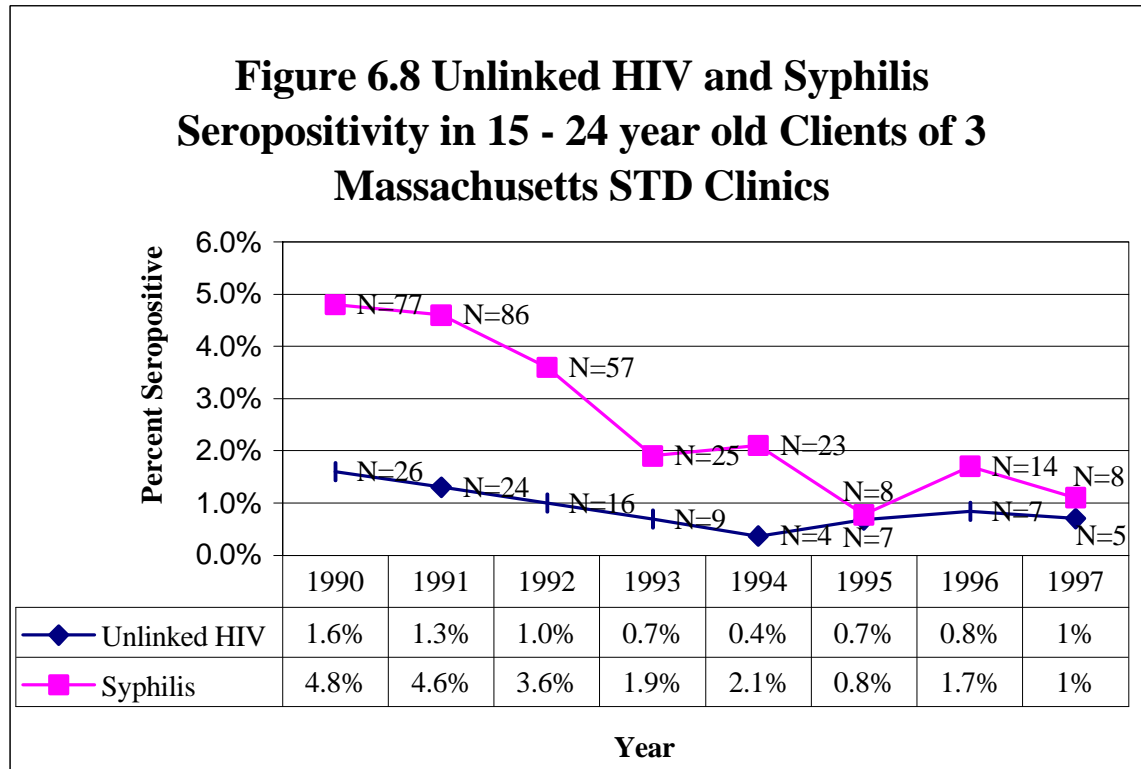


Figure 6.7 Alive AIDS Cases in 13-24 Year Old Age Category by HSR and Mode of Transmission



- Only 8% of cases in the Western region are attributed to injection drug use among 13 through 24 year olds as contrasted with 51 % of the total alive AIDS cases in the region.
- The Central region has the most even distribution across modes.
- The Northeast region has the largest proportion of ascribed heterosexual cases (34%).
- The Boston region has the highest absolute number of cases attributed to IDU/ MSM, as well as the highest percentage of cases among men having sex with men.
- The Metro West region has the highest proportion of cases in the “Other” mode category (38%). “Other” is also the most predominant mode in this region. The greatest proportion of “other” is the result of cases reported lacking transmission mode information.
- The Southeast region has the highest proportion of cases attributed to injection drug use (33%).

Figure 6.8 shows unlinked seroprevalance data among young adults defined as 15 to 24 year olds. Unlinked HIV seroprevalance at these STD clinics has remained below 2% since 1990, and syphilis seroprevalance at these same sites has decreased from 4.8% in 1990 to 1.0% in 1997.



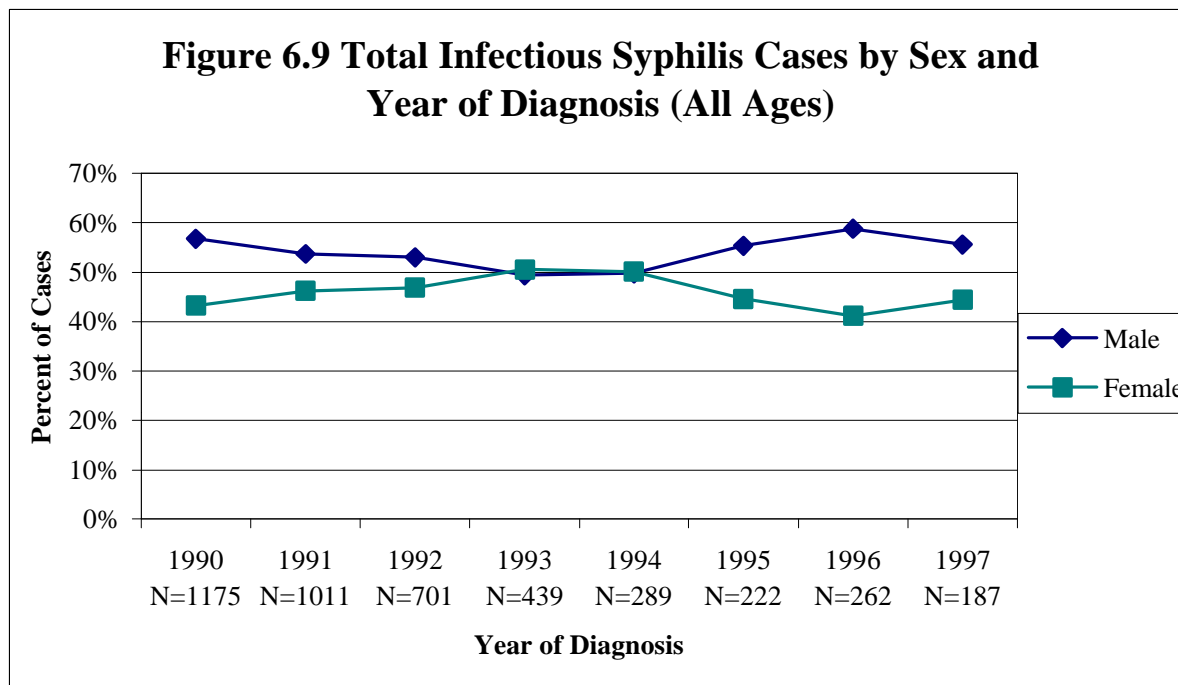
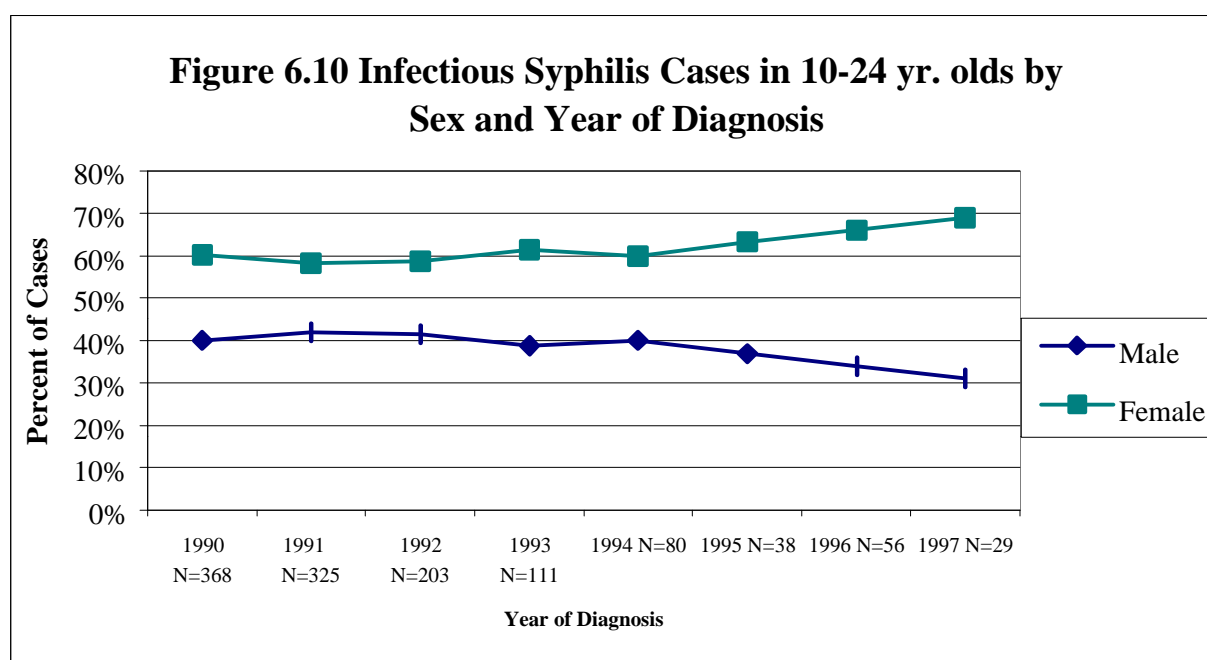


Figure 6.9 illustrates syphilis cases across all age categories and Figure 6.10 illustrates the distinction between syphilis cases by sex for 10 to 24 year olds. The total cases of syphilis have decreased significantly for all age categories since 1990. It should be noted that a greater proportion of men make up cases among the total population while a greater proportion of women make up cases in the 10 through 24 year age category. This suggests that younger women are having sex with older men and acquiring syphilis this way.



The most current data on teen births in Massachusetts show that births to teen mothers in 1996 represented 7.3% of total births. Though White women accounted for over half of the teen births in 1996 (50.5%), White teens accounted for only 4.8% of the total births among White women. Black and Hispanic teens, on the other hand, accounted for 14.8% and 22.2%, respectively, of the total births in these groups. Teen births are limited in value as an indication of teenage sexual activity, since they only capture a measure of unprotected sexual intercourse which results in a fetus being carried to term. Therefore, teen births data undercount the number of young women engaging in unprotected sexual behaviors.

Figure 6.11 Massachusetts Teen (<20) Births by Race/Ethnicity in 1996							
	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Other	Unknown	Total
Number Teen Births	2,952	810	1722	164	155	46	5,849
Percentage of Total Births in each Racial/Ethnic Group	4.8%	14.8%	22.2%	4.6 %	14.1%	8.6%	---